

Inside this Issue:

- 1** ANSWER Names 22 to Hall of Fame!
- 1** Option 1 of ANSWER "Good to Go"
- 1** ANSWER SDC Authors Regional Response to OIG Audit Report
- 2** And the Survey Says...
- 2** Lessons Learned about MAC Task Order Options
- 2** Dec/Jan Events
- 2** ANSWER POCs



General Services Administration
ANSWER Solutions Development Center
9988 Hibert Street, Suite 102
San Diego, CA 92131
858.530.3175
1.877.534.2208

<http://answer.gsa.gov>

ANSWER IT

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION BY THE ANSWER SOLUTIONS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

ANSWER Names 22 to Hall of Fame!

Ann Gladys

Following an incredibly busy FY2000, the business stats are in and a number of Project Managers from across FTS are being recognized for their efforts with the ANSWER Contracts. To this end, the following individuals are acknowledged for the complexity, project value, and number of projects they support via ANSWER. For the majority, the dollar value of their projects exceeds \$10M! For others, the number of projects and/or the complexity of requirements merits "Hall of Fame" status. In alphabetical order, the inductees are: **Joe Bacio**, "Top Honor Awardee"; **Marlene Barrett**; **Andrea Brown**; **Sandy Cordell**; **Gary Duffala**; **Kate Fizell**; **Frank Getz**; **Paul Gurian**; **Ron Heald**; **Valeria Kalscheur**; **Tim Martin**; **Chris Matthews**; **Kevin Metcalf**; **Joe Pechinko**; **Burl Pepper**; **Mara Schultz**; **Marty Snyder**; **Larry Solliday**; **Pat Tauschek**; **Steve Viar**; **Dave Williams**; and **Richmond Wong**.

This is a small subset of those who have worked with ANSWER, its Industry Partners, and the SDC. Everyone has toiled extraordinarily hard, the efforts show, and the results are even more apparent in the feedback we receive from the client community.

All of us in the ANSWER SDC are most excited about the quality and quantity of work that has been brought to the ANSWER Contracts; for no matter how great a contract is, it is worth very little, if anything, if it is not used. For your continued support, we cannot thank you enough.

Fiscal Year 2001 brings with it many challenges; technology that appears to have no boundaries, an evolving political structure, a revived interest in procurement practices, and an organizational passion to be the greatest and best for our clients. We, in FTS, are all postured with our goals and enthusiasm, to bring our clients the very best in IT and the very best in responsive service. Happy Fiscal New Year to all!!!

Option 1 of ANSWER

"Good to Go"

Thelma Riusaki

The ANSWER PCO has notified the ANSWER contractors that the Government intends to extend the term of the ANSWER contracts for a period of one year beginning January 1, 2001, in accordance with Section I.20 of the ANSWER contracts. Pursuant to Section I.8, Clause 52.222-43, Fair Labor Standards Act and Service Contract Act – Price Adjustment, a request for new revised wage determinations was submitted to the Department of Labor, Washington, DC. The new revised rates will apply to the non-exempt skill levels 20, 21, 22, 55, 56, 57 and 58, and will be forwarded to all contractors, for them to submit their adjusted price proposals for these skill levels for the first option period.

ANSWER SDC Authors Regional Response to OIG Audit Report.

Mimi Bruce and Sheila Ames

An OIG audit report of the Federal Technology Service's use of Multiple Award, Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts was issued on September 19, 2000. The report initiated by GSA's Office of Acquisition Policy requested review of the FTS IDIQ contracts. There were five overall areas of recommendation which covered procurement practices, fair opportunity, management control, the efficiency of collecting contract access fees, and transition plans to provide uninterrupted support to FTS clients. Of the 13 recommendations made by the OIG, the ANSWER SDC was able to respond positively to 10 of the recommendations (continued on page 2)

And The Survey Says...

At our last ANSWER QPM attendees were surveyed for feedback about ANSWER. Top items in the positive column included citations about the spirit of cooperation, quick response times re contract/task issues, and the ease and enthusiasm with which we conduct business. Suggestions for the future included improvements to the ITSS, joint marketing, and more debriefs.

(continued from page 1)

because the SDC had either completed a suggestion from the recommendation or had ongoing efforts in those areas. The remaining recommendations were all addressed with positive action items. Overall, the ANSWER SDC supports the recommendations in the audit report and in most cases has already implemented many of the auditors recommendations.

Lessons Learned about MAC Task Order Options

Mimi Bruce and Sheila Ames

As the opportunity to manage complex acquisition scenarios under the Multiple Award Contract (MAC) vehicles increases, we find ourselves at times in "uncharted waters" which increases the potential for misunderstandings and missteps. In the spirit of helping all of us enhance our contract administration skills, the ANSWER SDC will periodically share "lessons learned", and we invite all of you to share your experiences in managing MACs with us. The following example emphasizes the need to state our evaluation criteria and methodology in our Request for Proposal (RFP) as clearly as possible, and then be consistent in following our RFP requirements in the source selection process. If certain aspects of an RFP change, we need to amend the RFP prior to receipt of task order proposals and to communicate the change to the contractors. Through this process the contractors are assured that everyone will be proposing to the same requirements, and evaluated in accordance with the stated requirements. While this process is difficult, the more complex requirements become, the more important it becomes that the process is followed, thereby assuring all contractors of receiving a fair opportunity to compete for the requirement.

Case Study: A task order to provide hardware refreshment, software installation and functional training services was issued to the 10 ANSWER Contractors. The RFP cover letter listed the evaluation criteria as staffing and management plan, technical experience and cost. The period of performance is from 10/01/2000 through 9/30/2001, with (8) possible one-year options. Proposals received included pricing for only the twelve-month period as requested in the RFP cover letter. Contractors were requested to state whether or not any discounts are offered, and if those discounts would continue in the option years. During proposal evaluation, firms that offered option discounts were scored higher than those firms that did not propose discounts in the option years.

The language in the RFP cover letter and SOW which referred to options was not clear as to whether or not the options were being evaluated, nor how they would be evaluated, and what value, if any, discounts would receive. Pricing was only requested for 12 months.

Analysis and Recommendation - Had a protest been filed to the GSA Ombudsmen, the lack of clarity and consistency regarding options in the evaluation process most probably would have been the basis for a legitimate protest. However, under the MAC process, task orders are not protestable except for protests on the grounds that the order increases the scope, period of performance, or maximum value of the contract (10 U.S.C. 2304c(d) and 41 U.S.C. 253j(d)).

Recommendations of GSA's Acquisition Policy Office: 1) remove the reference to the eight (8) one year renewal options in the cover letter and SOW; and 2) allow the task to continue for the initial 12-month period of performance with the understanding that work beyond 12 months will be re-competed.

In general, when we issue an RFP to our contractors, we must ensure that we **clearly state our requirements, the evaluation criteria and methodology including relative importance so that the contractors can have a fair opportunity to compete.** As in this Case Study, if we cite options in a task order, **the full performance of the work (including any option years) must be defined and fully priced and evaluated.** By pricing and evaluating the option years, along with the base performance period of the task, we can determine if the pricing is balanced over the period of performance, and we can derive a ceiling price for the task order.

Dec/Jan Events

Date: 12/11-15
Location: Oakland, CA
Event: Solutions Edu, Proj Mgt

Date: 12/12
Location: Ft. Worth
Event: Region 7 RPM

Date: 12/13
Location: Chicago
Event: Region 5 RPM

Date: 12/14
Location: Bremerton
Event: Region 10, RPM

Date: 1/8
Location: DC
Event: FEDSIM, PM

Date: 1/9
Location: Philadelphia
Event: Region 3, RPM

Date: 1/10
Location: New York
Event: Region 2, RPM

Date: 1/11
Location: Boston
Event: Region 1, RPM

Date: 1/22-26
Location: Bremerton
Event: Solutions Edu – PBSOW

Date: 2/26-3/3
Location: Ft. Worth
Event: Solutions Edu – MAIDIQ Contracting

ANSWER POCs

Thelma Riusaki, ANSWER PCO
510.637.3880

Armando Santos
Safeguard PCO
510.637.3875

Sheila Ames, Contracting Officer
510.637.3894

Mimi Bruce, Client Service Mgr
510.637.3890

Paul Martin, Client Service Mgr
510.637.3884

Lyle Hull, Dir, Business Dev
858.537.2204

Jill Schillinger
Business Development Mgr
858.530.3177

Sherrie Householder
Solutions Edu PM/Provost
858.537.2210

Ann Gladys
Director, ANSWER SDC
858.537.2201

